

FACT SHEET: CHEMICAL HAIR TREATMENTS

Chemical hair treatments include permanent waving, straightening and hair lightening/coloring. These treatments cause permanent changes to the hair.

Q: WHO IS LICENSED TO PERFORM THESE SERVICES?

A: In California, only licensed cosmetologists and barbers working in state-licensed salons or barber shops may perform chemical hair treatments.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM CONSIDERING HAVING A CHEMICAL HAIR TREATMENT?

A: When considering having a chemical hair treatment, ask the cosmetologist/barber to do a pretest. A pretest can help determine how your hair will react to the chemicals used and whether you can get your desired result. **Be sure to ask the cosmetologist/barber in advance if there is a charge for a pretest.**

Q: WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRETESTS?

A: Some types of pretests include:

1. Preliminary Test Curl: This test is performed for permanent wave services. It can indicate actual processing time and curl results based on the curler size and product used.
2. Strand Test: This test is performed for hair coloring services. It can determine processing time, color result, and whether the hair is able to withstand the effects of the chemical being used.

Q: AM I PROTECTED DURING A CHEMICAL HAIR TREATMENT?

A: Yes, for all chemical hair treatments, a towel and/or other sanitary neck strip must be used to keep the protective covering (e.g., shampoo cape, drape, smock, etc.) from directly touching the skin.

Q: WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE CHEMICAL SOLUTION GETS ON ME?

A: Immediately remove the chemical solution from the skin. Be sure to tell your cosmetologist/barber immediately if you feel chemicals dripping on your skin or if you begin to feel a burning sensation.

Q: CAN THE STRONG ODOR FROM THE CHEMICALS HURT ME?

A: Salons and barber shops should have adequate ventilation. If a chemical odor causes you any discomfort, immediately inform your cosmetologist/barber.

Q: SHOULD I WAIT TO SHAMPOO MY HAIR AFTER HAVING A CHEMICAL TREATMENT?

A: Yes, you must wait before shampooing your hair after having a chemical treatment because it is critical that the hair be allowed to adjust to the permanent changes. Be sure to listen to your cosmetologist's/barber's advice and wait the specified number of hours or days before shampooing your hair. This will help to avoid severely damaging it.